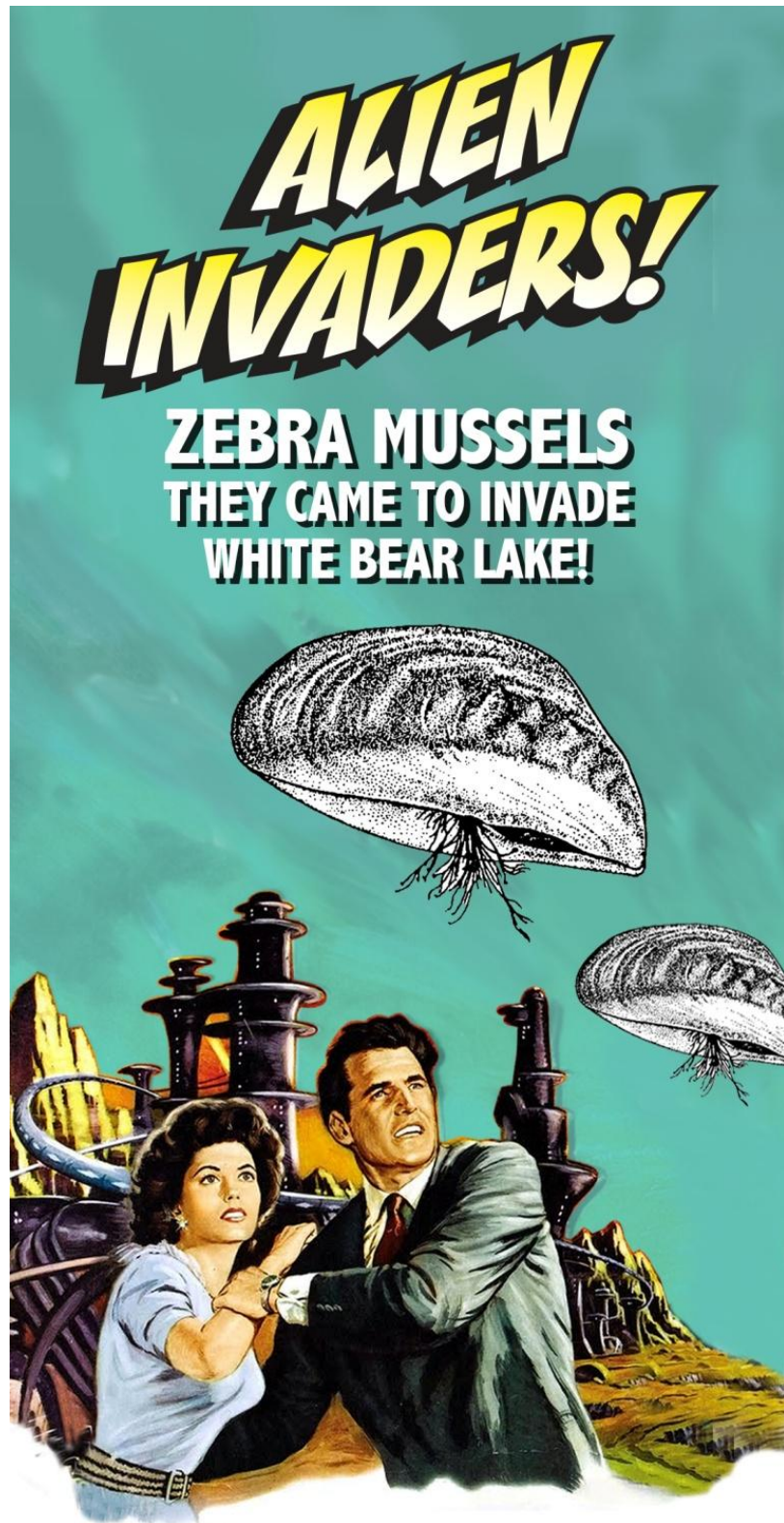


Zebra mussels brochure 2016

A print version is available for public distribution. Contact the White Bear Lake Conservation District (WBLCD) to request paper copies.



**Information for area residents,
boaters, and lakeshore
property owners**

WHITE BEAR LAKE CONSERVATION DISTRICT



TRUE OR FALSE: Zebra mussels in White Bear Lake

TRUE OR FALSE: *Now that zebra mussels have been found in our lake, preventative measures are no longer needed.*

FALSE! Now that zebra mussels are established in White Bear Lake, we must not let down our guard. The prevention practices described in this brochure will help prevent *other* invasive species—such as invasive snails and spiny water fleas—from entering our lake. We also have a responsibility to obey state laws and do what we can to keep zebra mussels from spreading beyond White Bear Lake.

TRUE OR FALSE: *Preventing spread of zebra mussels is of concern only to boaters using boat trailers.*

FALSE! All users of the lake and residents of its shores have a role to play in controlling the spread of aquatic invasive species. Special rules apply to stationary equipment such as dock sections, boat lifts, and swimming platforms that have been in the lake.

TRUE OR FALSE: *zebra mussels will seriously disrupt our use of the lake.*

TRUE... TO SOME EXTENT. Zebra mussels can encrust boats and docks, clog boat motors and pipes, cut the feet of swimmers, and displace native mollusks. Some helpful suggestions for living with zebra mussels are contained in this brochure.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Zebra mussels in White Bear Lake

1. How do I recognize a zebra mussel?

A zebra mussel is a clam-like, D-shaped bivalve that can attach itself to any solid surface. The zebra mussel gets its name from the dark, striped pattern on its shell, usually a light beige color with zigzag stripes. But some can be very dark with stripes that are hard to see. Zebra mussels are small, averaging about an inch long, no longer than two inches. Their life span is four to five years.

2. Where did they come from?

In the late 1980s, zebra mussels spread from Europe to the Great Lakes in contaminated ballast water discharged from foreign ships. From there, they expanded their range to rivers and inland lakes, spread primarily by attaching to boat hulls, aquatic plants, nets, fishing equipment, or in water.



3. Attempts have been made to eradicate zebra mussels in other lakes. Can they be eradicated in White Bear Lake?

In cases where new zebra mussel infestations are discovered early, when the mussels are still limited in distribution, it may be possible to eradicate the population with pesticide treatments. Unfortunately, the infestation in White Bear Lake has already spread widely and cannot be eliminated.

4. How quickly will zebra mussels spread in White Bear Lake?

No one knows for sure, but it could be several years before they reach their full extent in the lake. Their population will expand and contract with their food supply.

5. How bad will the infestation get in our lake?

No one can predict how abundant zebra mussels may become in any lake. While White Bear Lake has lower nutrient levels leading to less algae to nourish zebra mussels, other similar lakes have abundant populations.

6. Are there any good things about having zebra mussels in White Bear Lake?

While some claim that zebra mussels “clean up” the water through their filter-feeding to remove algae, this can have negative results. Clearer water can allow aquatic vegetation to become more abundant or grow in deeper water. Also, zebra mussels may reduce the food available for larval (newly-hatched) fish.

7. What can boaters and anglers do to prevent zebra mussels from spreading beyond White Bear Lake?

When pulling your boat out of the lake, remove all plants, animals or mud that may be on or in your boat or trailer. Next, all boats and trailers must be drained of water before leaving the lake, and drain plugs must be left open while in transit. All bait buckets, live wells, bilges and containers that have held lake water must be completely emptied before leaving the boat ramp area. Unused live bait that has been in contact with the water must be thrown in the trash or placed in clean water from outside the lake. Where possible, clean boats, trailers, and containers with a pressure hose.

8. What can lakeshore residents do to prevent zebra mussels from spreading beyond White Bear Lake?

It is illegal to transport zebra mussels (alive or dead) beyond lakeshore property without a DNR permit. Stationary equipment such as docks, boat lifts or swimming platforms coming out of the lake must be drained and dried for 21 days before moving them to another body of water. If they are encrusted with mussels, the mussels must either be scraped off or a DNR permit must be obtained to move the equipment. For example, if you were to sell dock sections on Craig’s List, you must pull them out of the lake to dry for three weeks and scrape off any visible mussels before selling them.

It is legal, however, to store docks, boats and equipment with attached mussels on shore without a permit.

9. How should I dispose of zebra mussels I may find or remove from boats, docks or other objects in the water?

If it is not feasible to leave the mussels in the water or on your lakeshore property, you may contact the DNR to obtain the proper permit to move them for disposal. Any object you wish to toss out that is covered with mussels—for example a discarded soda can found in the water—must have all mussels scraped off, and then be drained and dried, before tossing it in the trash or recycle bin. Do not put mussels, bait, or lake water down toilets or drains.

10. How can I protect my boat motors from being clogged and damaged by zebra mussels?

Immature zebra mussels are very small and can easily enter a boat’s cooling system and clog it, causing it to run hotter. If you notice this, inspect the system and remove any zebra mussels. Here are some suggested steps to protect your boat and motor:

- If you have a boatlift, keep your boat lifted out of the water between uses.
- Run your boat regularly, at least twice a week at slow speeds for 10-15 minutes
- Wash your boat with high-pressure water (hot water >104°F if available).
- Use motor “muffs”, also known as motor flushers, to remove mussels
- Apply anti-fouling coatings to the hull and the engine’s cooling system to prevent zebra mussel attachment.
- In-line strainers can be installed in the engine’s cooling system.

11. Are any localized treatments for swimming beaches and dock areas available?

The DNR generally does not issue permits to kill zebra mussels with pesticides in a small area of a lake where zebra mussels are widespread. If you scrape zebra mussels off a dock or equipment, you cannot dispose them beyond your lakeshore property without a DNR permit.

12. Should I report a zebra mussel if I find one? To whom?

Since the infestation is quite new, the DNR is requesting that citizens continue to report new findings so they can track the spread of the mussels. After the mussels become fully established, there will be no need to continue reporting them. To report a finding of zebra mussels, use the DNR form specifically prepared for White Bear Lake on the WBLCD website: http://www.wblcd.org/wl/images/WBL_Boatlift_Sampling_Datasheet_2.pdf. The DNR also has a statewide zebra mussel monitoring program (not just White Bear Lake) described at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteering/zebramussel_monitoring/index.html.

13. What role does the White Bear Lake Conservation District (WBLCD) play in controlling aquatic invasive species?

While Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) control is governed at the state level by the DNR, the WBLCD does fund and administer an annual program to monitor and control Eurasian water milfoil, and it includes AIS information in its educational outreach efforts.

14. Where can I get more information?

For more information about AIS and the laws controlling their spread, contact the Minnesota DNR or visit their AIS web page: http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/shoreland_owners.html

To keep current on all White Bear Lake issues and lake activity, go to: www.wblcd.org

